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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to determine (1) if the majority of Texas professors of reading agree on the value of 15 instructional experiences for preservice teachers of reading, (2) to what extent the 15 selected instructional activities are already required for prospective reading teachers, and (3) some of the basic competencies that college reading professors expect of beginning reading teachers. A questionnaire asked professors at colleges and universities to evaluate a variety of preservice learning activities by judging them according to their appropriateness and desirability. Data indicated which activities were considered most valuable and which were being implemented as requirements in preservice reading courses. By examining these preservice activities, the following list of eight competencies was compiled: (1) demonstrate knowledge of the basic skills of reading; (2) demonstrate evaluative skill in selecting instructional materials for the classroom; (3) demonstrate knowledge of a variety of instructional approaches; (4) be able to critically analyze microteaching sessions; (5) demonstrate skill in interviewing students regarding their achievement and interests; (6) demonstrate skill in administering and evaluating selected diagnostic reading tools; (7) demonstrate skill in conducting reading lessons with individuals, small groups, and large groups; and (8) demonstrate skill in using instructional and screening machines. (RC)

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EVALUATIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS OF READING

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This study began as the researcher served on a reading program committee which was charged with identifying the minimal competencies for a pre-service teacher of reading. As the researcher began to examine existing teacher preparation programs in Texas, it became evident that faculties at Texas universities had identified quite different competencies for classroom teaching of reading. While Texas Women's University, for example, prepared undergraduates to assume major roles in diagnosis, prescription, and remediation of reading difficulties, other universities (Texas Tech University, Texas Christian University, North Texas State University, etc.) concentrated on competencies for general classroom instruction. The lack of state-wide descriptive guidelines for classroom teachers of reading in Texas and the apparent broad differences among teacher education programs led the researcher to examine to what extent Texas Professors of Reading agreed on the value and desirability of selected pre-service activities for classroom teachers of reading.

The purposes of this study were to determine (1) if the majority of Texas professors of reading agree on the value of fifteen instructional experiences for pre-service teachers of reading, (2) to what extent the fifteen selected instructional activities are already required experiences for prospective reading teacher, and (3) some of the basic competencies that

college reading professors expect of beginning reading teachers.

The results of this study provide the following: (1) an evaluation of eight categories of pre-service instructional experiences by 36 professors of reading, (2) the percentage of professors who require selected instructional experiences at 17 Texas colleges and universities, and (3) some basic competencies that college professors expect of beginning reading teachers.

Collection of Data

A questionnaire asked 65 participants at 25 colleges and universities to evaluate a variety of pre-service learning activities by judging them according to their appropriateness and desirability (see Appendix A.) Thirty-seven professors of reading at 17 Texas colleges and universities returned questionnaires. Responses were received from the following teacher-training institutions:

(1) Abilene Christian College
(2) Baylor University
(3) Lamar State University
(4) North Texas State University
(5) Sam Houston State University
(6) Southern Methodist University
(7) Southwest Texas State University
(8) Stephen F. Austin State University
(9) Sul Ross State University
(10) Tarleton State College

(11) Texas Christian University

(12) Texas Tech University

(13) Texas Woman's University

(14) University of Houston

(15) University of Texas at Austin

(16) University of Texas at El Paso

(17) West Texas State University

Each participant was asked to evaluate the appropriateness of experiences which would require the pre-service teacher:

(1) to demonstrate proficiency in the basic skills of reading,

(2) to examine and evaluate instructional materials,

(3) to examine and critique video-taped reading lessons,

(4) to observe classroom reading instructions prior to student teaching,

(5) to interview parents and students,

(6) to observe and conduct diagnoses of reading skills,

(7) to tutor in classroom and clinic situations,

(8) to learn to operate and use teaching machines.

For the purposes of this study, responses of 1 (appropriate and desirable) and 2 (somewhat appropriate and desirable) were tabulated as if the respondent believed that the activity was of significant importance for undergraduate students of reading and that the activity should be a part of their pre-service training. Responses of 3 (of questionable appropriateness and desirability) or 4 (undesirable and/or inappropriate) were tabulated as if the respondent considered the activity of little

or no value as a learning activity for future reading teachers. Participants were also asked to indicate if the activity was normally a requirement for undergraduate students of reading.

Presentation of Results

Basic Skills of Reading

Of 36 professors who responded, 97% felt that mastery tests on the basic skills of reading were valuable experiences for undergraduate students, and 3% (one respondent) felt that mastery tests were of questionable value. Eighty-two percent of the respondents indicated that some form of basic-skills mastery tests was required at the universities in which they taught, and 18% said that no such requirements were made in their classes.

Materials

Two questions (numbers 2 and 3) asked respondents to evaluate experiences which required the pre-service reading teacher to examine materials available for the classroom and to establish criteria for evaluating the materials. All responding professors felt that examination of materials was desirable, and 97% indicated that pre-service teachers were required to survey a variety of instructional materials during their undergraduate education. A slightly smaller number (88%) thought that activities which required pre-service teachers to establish criteria for evaluating instructional materials were valuable, and 50% indicated that such experiences were routine

requirements at their universities.

Video-Tape Instruction

Three questions asked participants to evaluate the effectiveness of using video-taped segments in undergraduate reading courses. The first of these questions (number 4) asked professors to evaluate the appropriateness of requiring pre-service teacher to observe and critique video-tapes of classroom reading lessons. Of 35 who responded, 57% felt that such activities were valuable. Three percent (one respondent) thought such activities were of questionable value. Thirty-eight percent included such experiences in reading education at their institutions, and 62% said that they did not use such media as a normal instructional tool.

A second question (number 5) asked instructors to evaluate the appropriateness of video-taping pre-service teachers during short "teaches." Eighty-eight percent of the respondents felt that such experiences were valuable, while 12% did not. Forty-seven percent said such activities were a common practice in undergraduate reading education courses at their universities, and 53% said they were not.

Later, participants were asked to evaluate the appropriateness of having the video-tapes of pre-service teachers critiqued. Specifically, professors were asked to judge the value of critiques by the person who taught, by peers, by the instructor, and by a combination of critiquers

TABLE 1

Percentage of Professors Who Considered Critiques of Video-Taped Teaches Valuable

Self Critique	Peer Critique	Instructor Critique	Combination
88%	76%	94%	80%

Observation

A fourth category of questions asked professors to estimate the value of requiring pre-service teachers to observe reading classes in public schools prior to student teaching. Of 34 responding to this question, 91% felt that observations of reading classes in public schools were valuable experiences prior to student teaching. Nine percent felt that such expe-riences were of questionable or no value. Ninety-one percent indicated that they required observations prior to student teaching, while 9% said that they did not.

Interviews

Questions 7 through 10 determined to what extent profes-sors valued experiences which brought pre-service teachers into contact with students and parents in interviews ragarding read-ing (conferences on progress, conferences on interests, etc.)

The first two of these questions (numbers 7 and 8) asked professors to evaluate the appropriateness of requiring future reading teachers to observe, first, interviews between teacher and parent, and then, interviews between teacher and student. Table 2 presents the following results:

TABLE 2

Percentage of Professors Who Considered Observations of Interviews as Valuable Pre-Service Experiences and Percentage Who Implement Such Requirements

	Valuable	Not Valuable	Implemented	Not Implemented
Observe Teacher/Parent Interviews	83%	17%	17%	83%
Observe Teacher/Student Interviews	80%	20%	37%	63%

These evaluations establish that about 80% of the professors valued interview observations with both parents and students as desirable experiences for pre-service teachers. Observation of interviews between teachers and parents was implemented by 17% of the respondents; observation of interviews between teachers and students was implemented by 37%.

Questions 9 and 10 were similar to 7 and 8 except that instructors were asked to evaluate the desirability of having pre-service teachers conduct rather than observe interviews. Table 3 illustrates the responses to these questions:

TABLE 3

Percentage of Professors Who Considered Conducting Interviews as Valuable Pre-Service Experiences and Percentage Who Implement Such Requirements

	Valuable	Not Valuable	Implemented	Not Implemented
Conduct Interviews with Parents	71%	29%	26%	74%
Conduct Interviews with Students	91%	9%	51%	49%

Table 3 supports a conclusion that a majority of professors of reading consider experiences that allow future teachers to conduct interviews with parents and students as desirable and appropriate pre-service experiences. Twenty-six percent of the professors implemented interviews with parents, and 51%, interviews with students.

Diagnostic Tools

Questions 11 and 12 asked professors to indicate which diagnostic tools they thought pre-service teachers should learn to administer and evaluate. Question 11 asked professors to judge the desirability of requiring pre-service teachers to observe on-the-job teachers collecting data that would be helpful in making reading diagnoses, including the administration of a variety of diagnostic tools. Question 12 asked them whether or not pre-service teachers should learn to administer the tools that were listed in question 11. Table 4 presents the professors' evaluations of having pre-service teachers observe diagnoses:

TABLE 4

Percentage of Professors Who Recommended Observing the Administration of Selected Diagnostic Tools for Pre-Service Teachers

	Total N	Percent Who Valued Observation as Desirable	Total N	Percent Who Implemented this Procedure in Their Classes
Informal Reading Inventory	36	97%	33	85%
Standardized Reading Tests	36	97%	33	50%
Interest Inventories	36	92%	33	73%
Oral Reading Tests	36	83%	34	50%
Classroom Reading Inventory	36	92%	34	50%
Case Study	36	67%	33	33%

Table 4 indicates that a majority of reading professors feel that classroom teachers of reading need to have pre-service training in diagnostic teaching. Requiring pre-service teachers to observe in-service teachers administering and evaluating diagnostic tools (except the case study) was considered valuable by at least 80% of the respondents. Table 4 also reflects that professors highly valued experiences which require pre-service teachers to observe in-service teachers administering and evaluating informal reading inventories and interest inventories. Space had been provided on the questionnaire for respondents to list additional diagnostic tools that they felt the pre-service teacher should observe, but only one respondent included another tool--a Self Concept Rating Scale.

One-half of the professors indicated that they required future reading teachers to observe teachers administering standardized reading tests, oral reading tests, and classroom reading inventories. Observation of the preparation of a case study was required by 33% of the respondents.

Professors were asked to evaluate which diagnostic tools they felt were valuable for pre-service teachers to learn to administer under supervision. Table 5 presents their evaluations:

TABLE 5

Percentage of Professors Who Recommended that Pre-Service Teachers Learn to Administer Selected Diagnostic Tools

	Total N	Percent Who Valued Administration of Tool	Total N	Percent Who Implemented Tool for Pre-Service Teachers
Informal Reading Inventory	36	100%	35	74%
Standardized Reading Tests	36	97%	34	32%
Interest Inventories	36	91%	34	52%
Oral Reading Tests	36	78%	34	29%
Classroom Reading Inventory	36	94%	35	49%
Case Study	35	66%	34	35%

Over 75% of the professors rated informal reading inventories (professionally prepared,) classroom reading inventories, standardized reading tests, and interest inventories as the most appropriate and desirable tools for future reading teachers to learn to administer, and 66% felt that the case study was a valuable tool for future classroom teachers.

When asked to indicate which of these tools they asked future teachers to administer and evaluate, they ranked the informal reading inventory as the most valuable, while oral reading tests were valued least. Table 6 presents the rank of selected diagnostic tests and inventories as used in pre-service education courses by Texas professors of reading.

TABLE 6

Rank of Selected Diagnostic Tools as Used in Undergraduate Reading Methods Courses

Rank	Tool
1	Informal Reading Inventory
2	Interest Inventories
3	Classroom Reading Inventories
4	Case Studies
5	Standardized Reading Tests
6	Oral Reading Tests

Work with Students

Questions 13, 14, and 15 asked professors to evaluate experiences which required pre-service teachers to work with public school children prior to their student teaching experiences. Question 13 asked professors to evaluate experiences which required the future reading teacher to work with children in a laboratory situation; question 14, with children individually or in small groups in classroom situations; and question 15, with children in mini-directed reading activities (D.R.A.) in public schools. Table 7 presents the results of these evaluations:

TABLE 7

Percentage of Professors Who Considered Teaching Experiences Before Student Teaching as Valuable

Pre-Service Requirements

	Total N	Percent Who Ranked Experiences as Valuable	Total N	Percent Who Require Such Experiences
Work with Children in a Laboratory Setting	34	91%	34	44%
Work with Individuals and Small Groups	36	97%	35	63%
Mini-Teaches (D.R.A.) in Classroom Setting	35	100%	34	62%

The majority of professors of reading value activities which bring the pre-service teacher into contact with the reading progress of school-aged children. All on-the-job experiences (laboratory, individual and small group instruction in the classroom, or directed reading activities) were ranked "valuable" by at least 90% of the respondents. Professors indicated that pre-service teachers were more often required to tutor in individual and small group settings than in laboratory settings.

Instructional and Screening Devices

The last question on the survey asked professors to judge the value of having pre-service teachers learn the use and operation of a variety of machines available to reading teachers, including some teaching machines and some diagnostic machines. Table 8 presents their evaluations:

TABLE 8

Percentage of Professors Who Required Pre-Service Teachers to Learn the Use and Operation of Machines Available to Reading Teachers

	Total N	Percent Who Value Activity as Valuable and Desirable	Total N	Percent Who Teach Use and Operation of Machine to Pre-Service Teachers
Pacing Devices	35	74%	33	33%
Tachistoscopic Devices	35	51%	32	40%
Reading Eye Camera	35	33%	33	3%
Visual Screening Devices	35	79%	33	18%
Auditory Screening Devices	35	74%	33	21%

A majority of the responding professors considered activities which introduced future reading teachers to the use and operation of all of these machines to be valuable and desirable activities. Apparently, however, no machine is introduced by a majority of professors. While the use of pacing devices, and vision and hearing screening devices were considered to be valuable by the largest percentage of professors, pacing devices and tachistoscopic machines were the ones that professors most often introduced to their students.

Summary

Results from this study support conclusions that a majority of Texas professors of reading value the following instructional activities to be worthy requirements of pre-service teachers of reading:

(1) to demonstrate proficiency in the basic skills of reading by scores on mastery tests,

(2) to examine and evaluate instructional materials,

(3) to observe classroom instruction in reading prior to student teaching,

(4) to be video-taped in short teaches,

(5) to have their video-taped teaches critiqued,

(6) to observe and to conduct interviews with parents and students regarding reading achievement and interests,

(7) to conduct diagnosis of reading achievement, including informal reading inventories, standardized reading tests, interest inventories, oral reading tests,

professionally published classroom reading inventories (e.g., Silvaroli,) and the case study,

(8) to tutor children individually or in small groups in classroom D.R.A.'s, in laboratory settings, and in small groups outside the classroom,

(9) to learn to use instructional and screening machines, including pacing devices, tachistoscopic devices, and visual and auditory screening devices. The majority of professors did not consider the reading eye camera as an important tool for pre-service teachers to learn to use.

Data from this study also support conclusions that a majority of Texas professors of reading implement the following requirements in their pre-service reading courses:

		Percent
(1)	to demonstrate proficiency in the basic skills of reading,	82
(2)	to examine instructional materials,	97
(3)	to evaluate instructional materials,	88
(4)	to observe classroom instruction in reading prior to student teaching,	97
(5)	to conduct interviews with students,	51
(6)	to learn to administer and evaluate:	
	(a) informal reading inventories,	74
	(b) interest inventories,	52
	(c) classroom reading inventories,	50

Percent

(7) to tutor children individually or in small groups in D.R.A.'s, 63

(8) to tutor children in small groups outside the classroom, 62

Among the instructional activities that were included on questionnaire, a majority of professors did not implement the following requirements:

(1) to observe or conduct interviews between parents and teachers, or to conduct interviews with parents,

(2) to administer and interpret standardized reading tests, oral reading tests, or case studies,

(3) to tutor children in a laboratory setting,

(4) to learn the use of and operation of any specific instructional or screening device.

By examining the pre-service activities that a majority of professors thought were valuable, the researcher compiled the following list of competencies that professors of reading seemed to agree should be required of pre-service teachers of reading.

(1) to demonstrate knowledge of the basic skills of reading,

(2) to demonstrate evaluative skill in selecting instructional materials for the classroom,

(3) to demonstrate knowledge of a variety of instructional approaches,

(4) to be able to critically analyze short teaches,

(5) to demonstrate skill in interviewing students regarding their achievement and interests,

(6) to demonstrate skill in administering and evaluating selected diagnostic reading tools,

(7) to demonstrate skill in conducting reading lessons with individuals, small groups, and large groups,

(8) to demonstrate skill in using instructional and screening machines.

By no means are the above eight competencies the only experiences that professors consider essential for pre-service teachers to demonstrate, but they can serve as basic competencies for pre-service reading teachers. The behavioral performance level could not be specified based on data in this study, but professors concerned with teacher education courses could easily supply such performance levels to the above recommended pre-service competencies.

In Column 1 please express your feeling about the value of the experience as an appropriate and desirable experience for the pre-service teacher who plans to teach reading.

1 = appropriate and desirable
2 = somewhat appropriate and desirable
3 = of questionable appropriateness and desirability
4 = undesirable and/or inappropriate

In Column 2 please write yes if the experience is already normally included in the pre-service training of prospective reading teachers, no if the experience is seldom or never included as part of their teacher preparation.

The pre-service teacher should:

Experience	Column 1 Relative Value	Column 2 Implemented
1. Demonstrate proficiency in basic skills (word attack, comprehension, study skills, etc.) determined by scores on "mastery" tests.		
2. Examine materials available for classroom use.		
3. Establish an evaluative system for classroom materials.		
4. Observe and critique video-tapes of classroom demonstrations of reading lessons.		
5. Be video-taped during short "teaches."		
(A) critiqued by self		
(B) critiques by peers		
(C) critiqued by instructor(s)		
(D) critiqued by some combination of 6, 7, & 8.		
6. Observe public school reading instruction prior to student teaching.		
7. Observe interviews with parents.		
8. Observe interviews with students.		
9. Conduct interviews with parents.		
10. Conduct interviews with students.		

Experience	Column 1 Relative Value	Column 2 Implemented
11. Observe administration or collection of data for evaluation of:		
(A) Informal Reading Inventories		
(B) Standardized, Group Reading Tests		
(C) Interest Inventories		
(D) Standard Oral Reading Tests (e.g. Gray, Gilmore, etc.)		
(E) Classroom Inventories (e.g. Silvaroli)		
(F) Case Studies		
(G) Other		
12. Administer and evaluate:		
(A) Informal Reading Inventories		
(B) Standardized, Group Reading Tests		
(C) Interest Inventories		
(D) Standard Oral Reading Tests		
(E) Classroom Inventories		
(F) Case Studies		
(G) Other		
13. Tutor in a laboratory situation.		
14. Work with individual students and small groups in classroom situations prior to student teaching.		
15. Present short segments in public school classrooms concentrating on particular methods or skills prior to student teaching.		
16. Learn operation and use of:		
Pacing Devices		
Tach-X		
Reading Eye Camera		
Visual Screening Devices		
Hearing Screening Devices		